



OFFICE OF

# COUNTY CLERK-RECORDER

MODESTO, CALIFORNIA 95353

95 00096

KAREN MATHEWS, COUNTY CLERK-RECORDER

October 11, 1994

The Honorable Pete Wilson  
Governor of California  
State Capitol  
1st Floor  
Sacramento, California 95814

INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENTAL  
STUDIES LIBRARY  
JAN 9 1995  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Dear Governor Wilson:

I am both mystified and extremely disappointed in your veto of Assembly Bill 3062. Had this become law, it would have extended Stanislaus County's pilot program (AB 1590, Chapter 527) for conducting elections by mail. According to your veto message, you rejected the bill primarily due to the purported possibility of fraud occurring in such elections. Based on our experience, this is nonsense. Despite my own initial misgivings, we've found mail ballot elections have not had a higher incident of fraud. The Secretary of State is aware of this result, as are members of your own staff, both parties' political consultants, and is widely known among local and national media. I've included a report for your perusal.

Moreover, we've found mail ballot elections are more convenient to the public, facilitate voter turnout, and significantly reduce the cost of elections. With respect to the latter, I estimate mail ballot elections saved Stanislaus County taxpayers approximately \$200,000 in the last year alone. These savings are enough to put four full-time sheriff deputies on the street.

There are a few points of your veto that are particularly hard to understand and conflict with your previous positions. For example, given your opposition to the "motor voter" law recently enacted by the federal government, as I understand it, your opposition is based on the cost to California of this unfunded federal mandate. I would agree with you on this point and I oppose "motor voter" legislation for the same reason. Therefore, it seems hypocritical for you to veto AB 3062 which in fact reduces election costs.

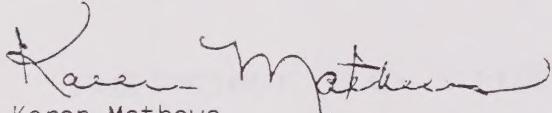


Page 2 of 2  
Letter to Governor Wilson  
AB 3062  
October 11, 1994

Another example is the financial crisis facing California and your proclivity for dealing with it by taking money from local governments to support the state budget. All elected officials should pursue any cost reduction measures available -- particularly measures which are proven to work. This leads me to believe your veto of AB 3062 (Snyder) was motivated by the same thing which probably inspired the "motor voter" legislation, i.e., partisan politics.

Finally, one of the things I feel people of the state and our nation are trying to say -- as indicated by increasingly low voter turnout -- is they are tired of their interests taking a back seat to silly partisanship. Unfortunately, you and other elected officials do not seem to get the message.

Sincerely,



Karen Mathews  
Stanislaus County  
Clerk-Recorder

Enclosure



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2025 with funding from  
State of California and California State Library

<https://archive.org/details/C124882114>

**CHAPTER 527, 1992**

**ALL-MAIL ELECTION PILOT PROJECT**

**Stanislaus County, California**

**REPORT TO THE STATE LEGISLATURE**

**October 11, 1994**

*Submitted by: Karen Mathews  
Stanislaus County Clerk-Recorder*



All-Mail Elections Pilot Project Report  
Stanislaus County  
October 1994

BACKGROUND

AB 1590, Chapter 527 enacted in 1992 allowed a pilot project to be conducted in Stanislaus and Placer counties permitting elections to be conducted by all-mail ballots. The pilot program is in effect until January 1995. The law required a report to the state legislature prior to December 1994 on the administration of all-mail ballot elections.

The Bill required the governing body of each city, county, or district to authorize an all-mail ballot election, and notify the Secretary of State of its intent to conduct such an election at least 88 days prior to the election.

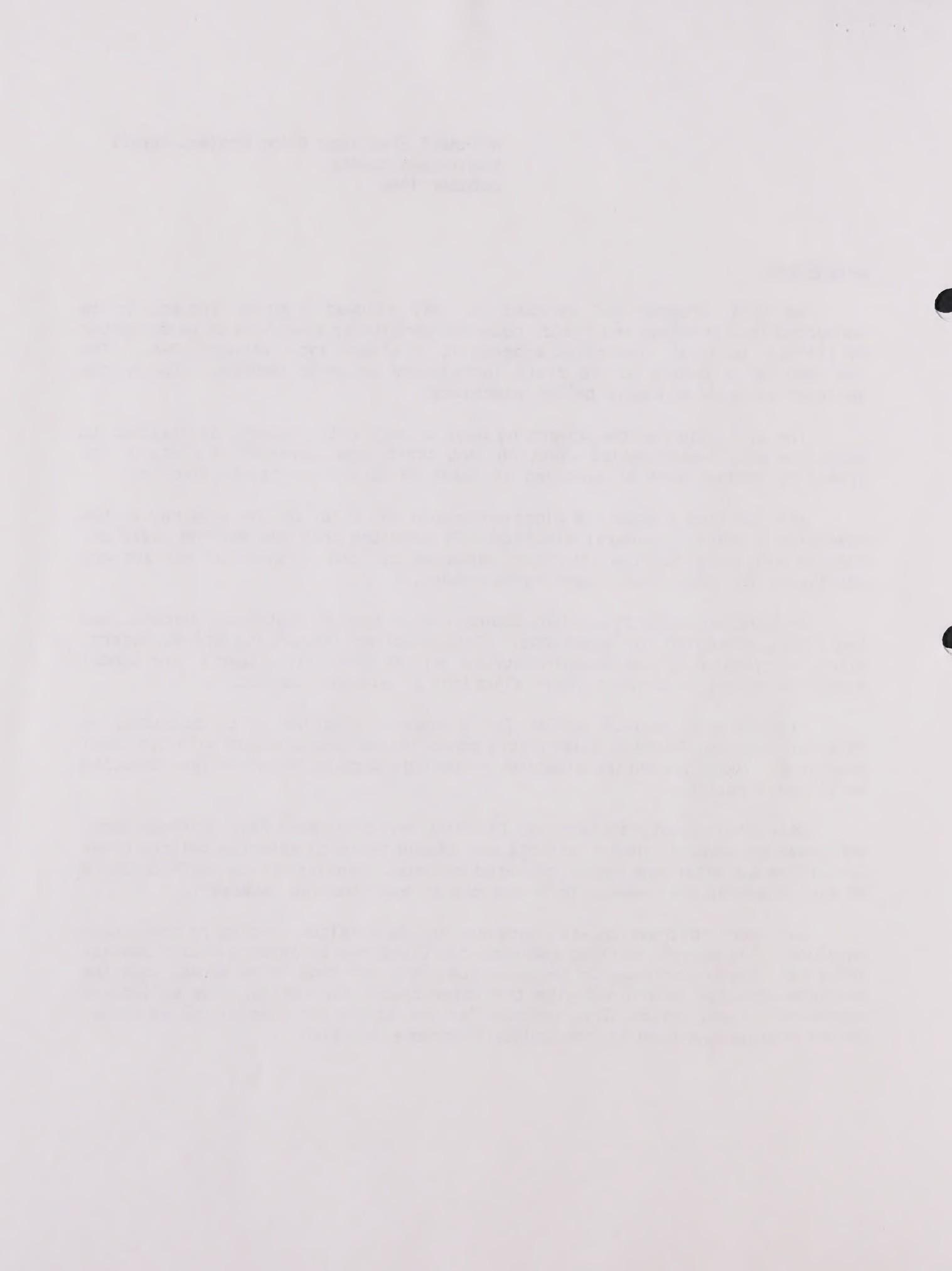
The law also stated the election should not occur on the same day as the statewide primary or general election. It provided that one polling place per city be available for the return of absentee ballots on election day and one additional for each 30,000 registered voters.

In November 1993, Stanislaus County had 50 special districts, schools, and two cities scheduled for elections. This involved 180,000 registered voters. With the exception of one school district, all of the cities, special and school districts agreed to conduct their elections by all-mail ballot.

When Governor Wilson called for a special election to be conducted in November 1993, our Board of Supervisors consolidated this election with our local elections. Thus, the entire election -- including state issues -- was conducted by all-mail ballot.

Stanislaus County's Elections Division hired 12 extra-help (minimum wage) employees to prepare (insert ballots and sample ballots) absentee ballots prior to mailing and after the return of voted ballots. Regular office staff consists of six permanent employees. Only one day of overtime was necessary.

All voter information was contained in one envelope, including the return envelope. The voter's mailing address, the Elections Division's return address and a bar code are printed on the envelope. This bar code is so we may scan the envelope upon its return and give the voter credit for voting. The ballot and sample ballot are inside. Instructions for voting are included on the envelope. Return postage was paid by the County Elections Division.



All-Mail Elections Pilot Project Report  
Stanislaus County  
October 1994

BACKGROUND (cont.)

Ballots were mailed third class, bulk rate with zip+4. Several meetings with the local postmaster resulted in an agreement where the bulk rate ballots would be treated as first class. We used an outside mailing vendor to apply a bar code for the post office to reduce our postal expense. Ballots were returned by business reply mail. We used the Post Office's Brahmas Service and received a reduced rate of \$.16 per ballot. Our experience demonstrated ballots were returned at a steady rate throughout the election. There were no surges or slowdowns, just a steady return pace (see attached graph).

All voters registered by E-29 were mailed an absentee ballot. Ballots were mailed during a four day period. In an effort to assist local campaigns, all interested parties were notified as to the dates and approximate geographic areas where ballots were mailed on certain specific days. This enabled the campaigns to time their campaign mailings with the course of the election.

Ballots were verified immediately upon their return to the Elections Division by our signature retrieval system. We began tallying ballots seven days prior to the election -- with no results available. They were then sealed and locked in a location with no public access. From beginning to end we were determined that everything performed in this election was open to the public. We use a ballot processing panel which includes members of the county civil grand jury, each political party, the press, League of Women Voters, etc. We had a lot of press outside our area observing and numerous citizens who were concerned or interested as to how this election was being conducted. Everyone who watched our procedures were satisfied the election was conducted above board and without problems.

All undeliverable ballots were returned to the Elections Division. 21,000 ballots were returned for insufficient or incorrect addresses. Voters who moved within their own precinct were re-issued ballots. There were approximately 400 re-sent. The remaining 21,000 undeliverable ballots were later used to conduct a purge and update voter registration files.

MEDIA COVERAGE

Much of the success of this election was due to the additional public education and media coverage of:

- o the manner in which the election was conducted
- o instructions to voters of when ballots would arrive  
how to vote them, and how to return the ballots.



All-Mail Elections Pilot Project Report  
Stanislaus County  
October 1994

MEDIA COVERAGE (cont.)

The local cable television company developed a one half hour segment on how to vote absentee; the local spanish station also covered how to vote and why we were conducting the election by mail.

VOTER TURNOUT

Stanislaus County's voter turnout was 44.2% (see attached graph). By 8 p.m. on Election Day we counted 98% of the votes. 6,000 ballots were returned at 11 receiving centers on Election Day. We had one early pick-up (Noon) at each receiving center. We processed these ballots on Election Day with the remainder counted the day after the election.

Campaigns could purchase lists on a daily basis of voters who returned absentee ballots.

Voter participation increased during this election by mail. We had one state organization, the State Teachers Association involved in the state's campaign for Proposition 170. They were quite pleased with how the election was conducted, and our involvement in sharing information with them on what was happening, when it was happening, etc. The end result was Stanislaus County had a high, positive vote for Proposition 170.

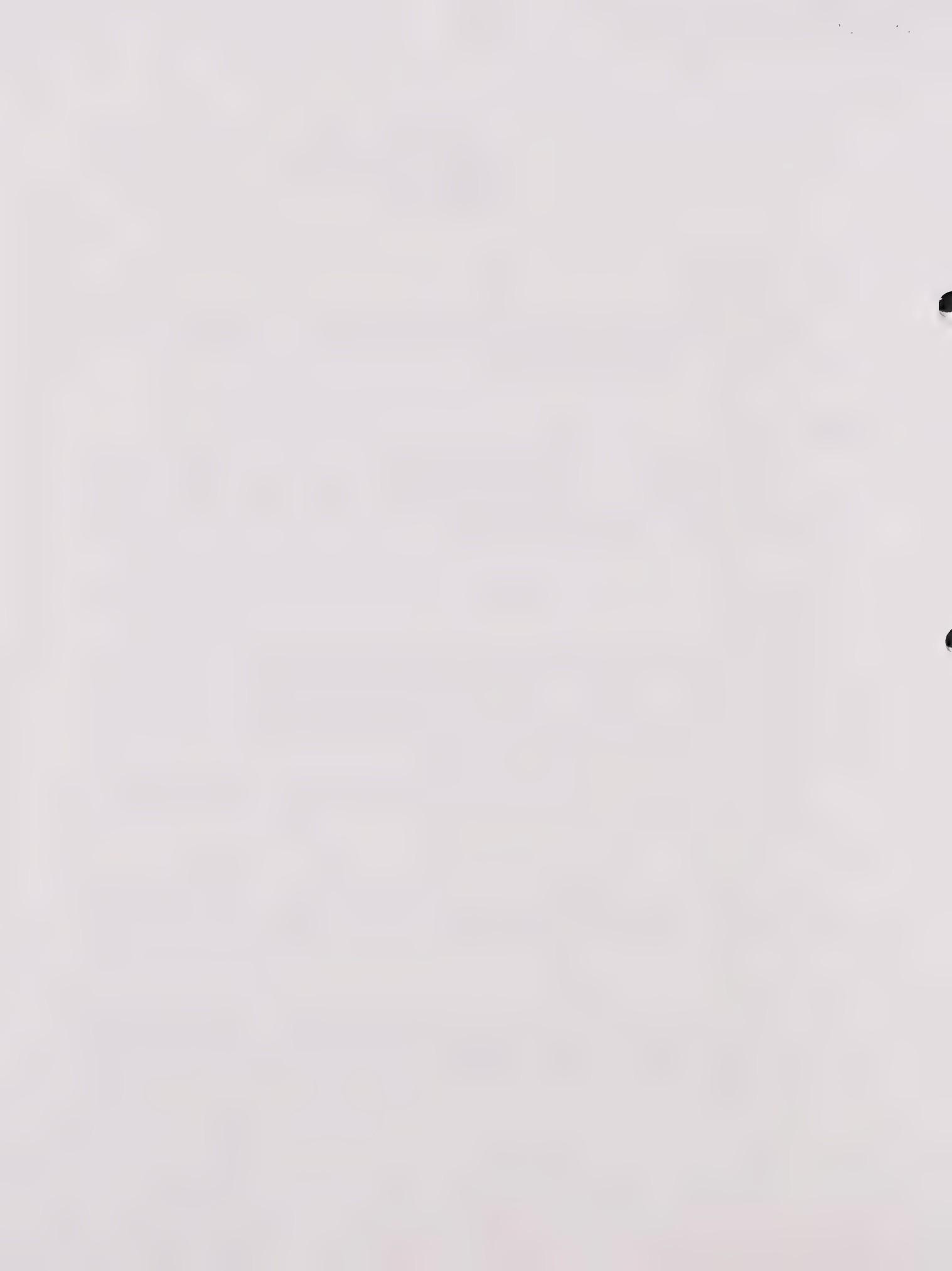
Proposition 172 had the highest passage in the state due to an organized, well-informed campaign.

FRAUD

The all-mail election had not one incident of voter fraud. This is in contrast with the 1992 presidential poll election wherein four incidents of potential voter fraud at polls were referred to the district attorney's office.

COST SAVINGS

The cost savings for an all-mail ballot versus a polling place election is significant. Because of our computer capabilities, as well as the postal savings we encountered, the county was saved \$200,000 over the cost of a polling place election.



All-Mail Elections Pilot Project Report  
Stanislaus County  
October 1994

CONCLUSION

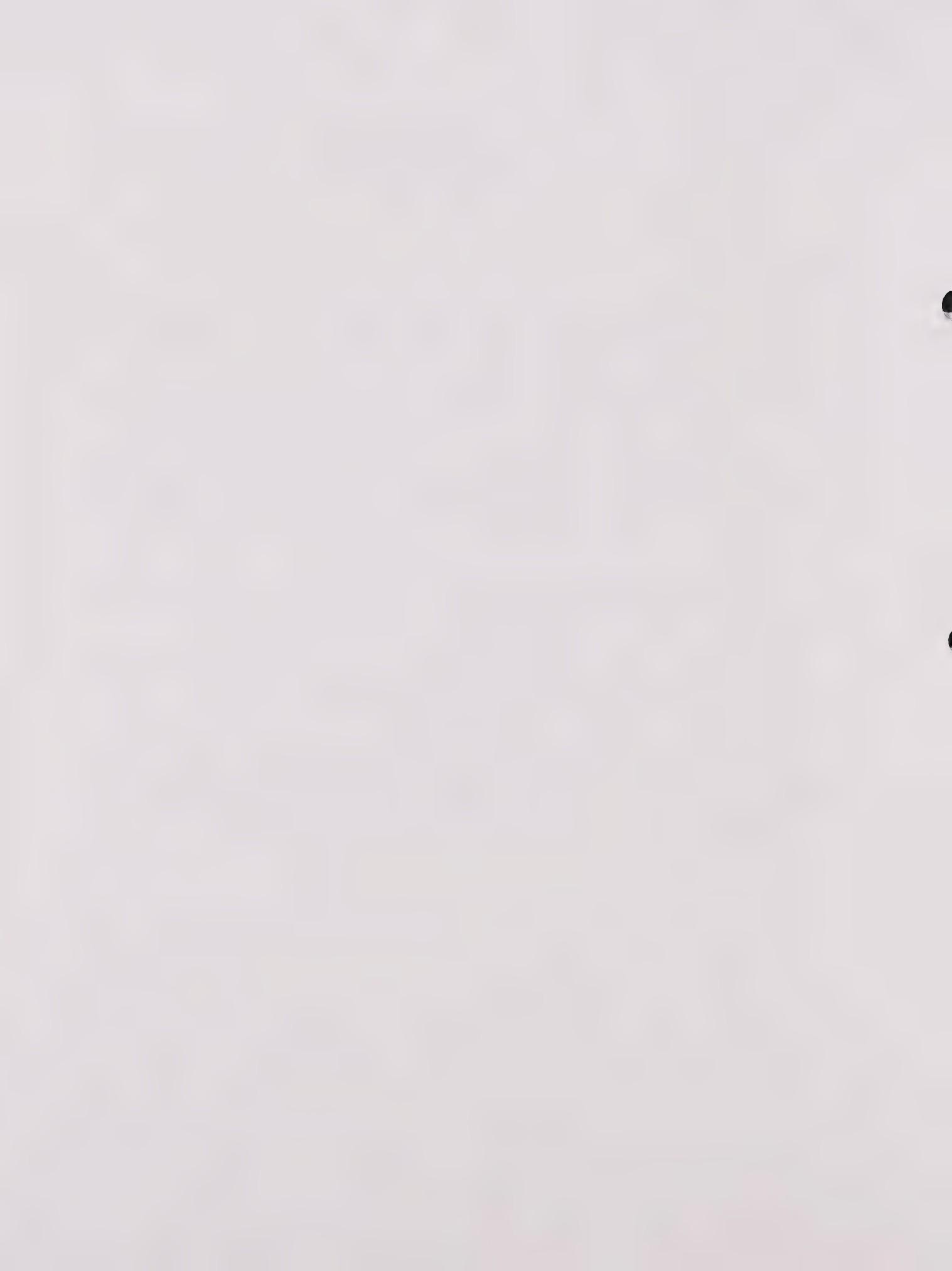
The administration of this election is easier, and there is much more control of problems and how to solve them than in a polling place election. With a poll election you don't know what's happening at the polls, or even if the polls open on time, etc. In addition there are always problems with election officers who only work with an election once or twice a year. They do not know much about election laws or don't remember the laws from election to election.

There was some public opposition regarding an all-mail election. However, we had no more complaints than in a poll election. We were very pleased with this election and would want to conduct another one. Our county requested an extension of this pilot program in hope of conducting more mail ballot elections for local issues.

25th District Assemblywoman Margaret Snyder proposed an extension of the pilot project (AB 3062) and was passed by both the state Senate and Assembly. Unfortunately, Governor Wilson decided to veto the bill.

It should be noted that prior to implementation of this pilot legislation, Stanislaus County conducted five (5) all-mail (90,000 registered voters) elections for the charter city of Modesto since 1989.

The many all-mail elections conducted in Stanislaus County in recent years have proven -- with current technology and administrative policies regarding the handling of voted ballots -- that fair and lower cost elections can be conducted. Many charter cities statewide are in the process of passing local laws to authorize all-mail election in the absence of state law.



# *STANISLAUS COUNTY*

## *ELECTIONS*

### *Voter Turnout Comparison*

	STATE	STANISLAUS COUNTY	DIFFERENCE
November 1979 Special State	37.4%	33%	-4.4%
June 1992 Presidential Primary	48%	41%	-7%
November 1992 Presidential General	75.32%	73%	-2.32%
<i>November 1993 State Special</i>	<i>38%</i>	<i>44.2%</i>	<i>+6.2%</i>

WILHELMUS VAN DER HORST

## INTRODUCTION

WILHELMUS VAN DER HORST

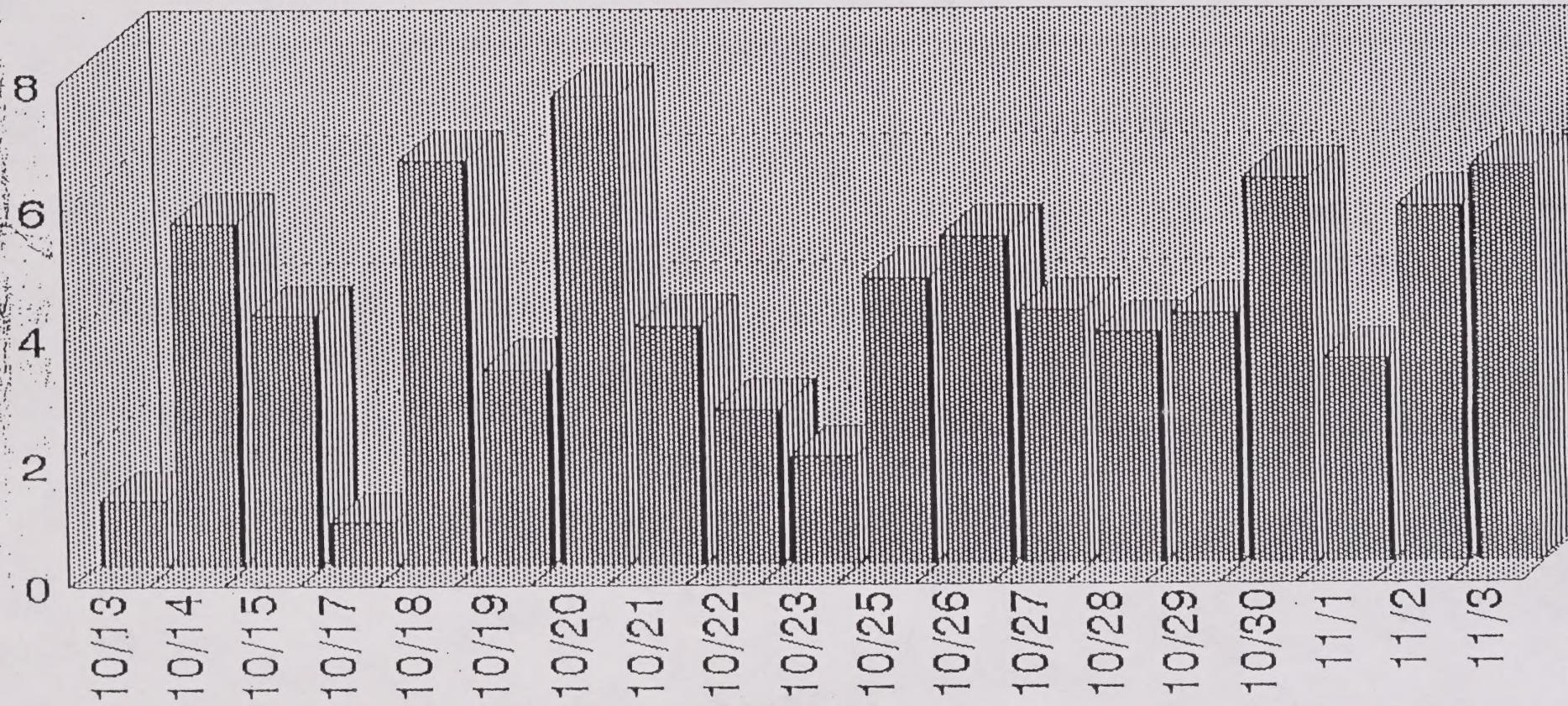
INTRODUCTION

STANISLAUS COUNTY

# Wanded Ballots (by date)

1993 November All-Mail Election

Thousands



Includes overcounter, receiving stations, challenged.

U.C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES



C124882114